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Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 December 2015, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Bhattarai (Chair) ..... (Nepal)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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Agenda item 160: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (*continued*)

Agenda item 114: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(c) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 134: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 69/262, entitled "Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction" (A/70/7/Add.25 and A/70/543)

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1. **Mr. Huisman** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 69/292, entitled "Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction" (A/70/543), said that the implementation of paragraphs 1 (a), (b) and (c) of resolution 69/262 would entail an additional appropriation of $670,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund.

2. Introducing the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/70/4) of draft resolution IX contained in the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2015 (A/70/23), he said that the terms of paragraphs 18 and 19 of the draft resolution would entail an additional appropriation of $269,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund.

3. Introducing the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.45: Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (A/C.5/70/10), he said that the terms of paragraph 5 of the draft resolution would entail additional appropriations of $565,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and $764,000 under section 4, Disarmament, of the proposed programmed budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund.

4. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the revised estimates resulting from the decisions contained in General Assembly resolution 69/292 (A/70/7/Add.25), said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the additional appropriation proposed by the Secretary-General. It also recommended that the Secretary-General should be requested to provide, on a routine basis, comprehensive information on the activities through which the requests of the General Assembly were implemented, as well as on the related requirements and financial implications, with a clear breakdown of the requirements for which a provision was included in the proposed programme budget and those for which a new appropriation was proposed. The Advisory Committee further recommended that the Secretary-General should be requested to provide the General Assembly with information on the unified methodology and coherent process that was being developed for updating costings related to the processing of official documents at all duty stations, as well as details of the unit rates to be applied at each duty station.

5. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the programme budget implications (A/70/7/Add.24) of draft resolution IX contained in the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the

Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2015 (A/70/23), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $21,300 in the travel resources requested, relating to the travel of two Secretariat staff members. In addition, the Advisory Committee had been informed of a reduction of $20,000 in the provision for local interpreters, owing to a miscalculation. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the Assembly adopt draft resolution IX, an additional appropriation of $227,700 would be required under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, representing a charge against the contingency fund.

6. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.45 (A/70/7/Add.26), he said that the activities to be undertaken by the Secretary-General with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, to be established in 2016 on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, would entail an additional appropriation in the amount of $1,329,500. The Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $8,000 in the amount of $50,000 proposed for consultancy services, noting that similar services had been provided for the biennium 2014-2015 at a cost of $42,000. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.1/70/L.45, additional appropriations of $565,500 and $756,000 would be required under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, and section 4, Disarmament, respectively, representing charges against the contingency fund.

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/70/7/Add.10 and A/70/348)

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (A/70/7/Add.15 and A/348/Add.5)

7. **Mr. Huisman** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the chapeau of the reports of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/70/348), said that the budget proposals for the 36 special political missions covered in the seven addenda to the chapeau document amounted to $571.4 million, representing some 50.8 per cent of the provision of $1.1 billion for special political missions included under Section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

8. The budget proposals for the 11 missions grouped under cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary General amounted to $38.3 million, while the proposed requirements for the 15 missions under cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels amounted to $39.6 million. The proposals relating to the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen under cluster I and to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) — United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism under cluster II had been presented in separate addenda, as had those relating to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The proposals for the eight missions under cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and commissions amounted to $190.1 million, while the proposed resources for UNAMA and UNAMI amounted to $183.3 million and $120.1 million, respectively.

9. The proposed number of civilian personnel for 2016 amounted to 3,648 positions, a reduction of 92 positions from 2015, reflecting the discontinuation of 90 positions under the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi (MENUB) and a net reduction of two positions under ongoing missions. Elements included in the chapeau, such as summaries of the factors contributing to variances between the appropriations and projected expenditures for the biennium 2014-2015 and between approved resources for 2015 and proposed resources for 2016, reflected efforts to improve the format and presentation of budgets for special political missions.

10. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2016 for UNAMI (A/70/348/Add.5), he said that the Mission's mandate had been extended until 31 July 2016 by Security Council resolution 2233 (2015), in which the Council had expressed concern regarding the situation of more than three million internally displaced persons and

refugees, the human rights abuses committed against women and girls by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the destruction by ISIL of cultural heritage in Iraq. The Council had also welcomed the recommendation of the Secretary-General to revise and prioritize the tasks of UNAMI. UNAMI had undertaken to address the revised priorities in consultation with the Government of Iraq, taking into account its needs and the evolving situation. The proposed resource requirements for UNAMI for 2016, at $120 million, represented a decrease of $16 million from 2015; the related proposed staffing complement amounted to 879 positions, a reduction of 21 positions from 2015.

11. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the chapeau of the reports of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/70/7/Add.10), recalled that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/264, a preliminary biennial provision of $1,130.4 million for special political missions had been included in the proposed programme budget for 2016-2017, later reduced by $6 million as part of a net reduction of $30 million stemming from efficiencies distributed across programme support components. Upon request for a breakdown of the reduction proposed for special political missions, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the reduction could not be broken down by mission. It was nevertheless of the view that the proposed reduction should have been justified. Moreover, as experience had demonstrated the impossibility of making precise predictions about resource levels for such missions, the level of reduction reflected in the Secretary-General's projections might prove optimistic.

12. For the 35 missions covered in the first six addenda to the chapeau of the Secretary-General's report (A/70/348), the Secretary-General proposed a total of 3,621 civilian positions, a net reduction of 29 positions from 2015. The reduction reflected decreases of 60 positions under UNAMA, 21 positions under UNAMI and eight positions under the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), partially offset by increases of 35 positions under the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somali (UNSOM); 14 positions under the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA); five positions under the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; four positions under the United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS); one position under the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL); and one position under the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA.) The comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the proposed staffing requirements for specific missions were contained in its related reports (A/70/7/Add.11, A/70/7/Add.12, A/70/7/Add.13, A/70/7/Add.14, A/70/7/Add.15 and A/70/7/Add.16.)

13. A single vacancy rate had been applied in estimating staff requirements for 2016 for special political missions. Given the persistently long recruitment timelines for filling newly established posts, the Advisory Committee believed that a different budgetary treatment was required in respect of new and continuing posts and recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to apply different vacancy rates for new positions in the estimates for 2016 for special political missions, in line with the methodology used for posts and positions established for the programme budget.

14. With regard to the costs and benefits of the Kuwait Joint Support Office, the Secretary-General indicated that the establishment of the Office had enabled the Organization to realize savings under personnel-related costs as a result of lower salaries and common staff costs in Kuwait compared with Afghanistan and Iraq. However, for 2016, the Secretary-General proposed the return of the planning and budget functions for UNAMA from Kuwait to Kabul and the relocation of most support functions for UNAMI from Kuwait to Iraq. The Advisory Committee questioned the repeated transfer of functions back and forth between Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait within a relatively short period of time, with financial implications arising from each transfer. It recalled its previous concerns with respect to the lack of clarity regarding the structures, functions and capacity of the UNAMA and UNAMI support offices in Kuwait and the Kuwait Joint Support Office. The Advisory Committee would request the Board of Auditors to review the costs and benefits of the Support Office.

15. The Secretary-General had indicated that the proposed vehicle holdings of several political missions

for 2016 varied significantly from the standard allocation, both in nominal terms and as a percentage of the standard allocation. Noting the lack of policy guidelines covering vehicle holdings by special political missions at different categories of duty station, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to develop such guidelines, taking into consideration the mandate, size and operational requirements of individual missions, and to report thereon in the proposed budget for 2017. Lastly, while it noted the improvements in the format and presentation of the proposed budget estimates in respect of special political missions, the Advisory Committee believed that the presentation of information could be further improved.

16. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed resource requirements for 2016 for UNAMI (A/70/7/Add.15), he noted that the planning assumptions for those requirements drew on the findings of a strategic assessment mission conducted in April 2015. The Advisory Committee recommended that the proposed resource requirements for civilian personnel should be reduced to reflect the application of a separate vacancy factor for newly established posts. It also welcomed the consolidation of similar or overlapping functions, such as the merging of the Acquisition Management Section with the Central Warehouse Section, and looked forward to receiving, in the Secretary-General's next report, information on efficiencies achieved and lessons learned in that context. The Advisory Committee believed that the operations of other special political missions might benefit from a similar consolidation of functions.

17. With respect to air operations, the Advisory Committee had requested detailed flight occupancy information on the Mission's regularly scheduled flights in 2015 in order to ascertain utilization rates, but had not received that information. It therefore recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to commission the Office of Internal Oversight Services to include an operational audit of UNAMI air operations in its audit programme for 2016.

18. Lastly, the Advisory Committee recommended against the transfer of the resident auditor functions of UNAMI and UNAMA from section 3, Political affairs, to section 30, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for 2016-2017, as well as the merging of the Resident Auditor Offices of the two missions into a single office in Kuwait. Should the General Assembly endorse those recommendations, the Advisory Committee recommended that the four positions located in the UNAMI Resident Audit Office should be retained to provide internal audit services in the Mission.

19. **Ms. Tan** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN reaffirmed its support for the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning funding and backstopping arrangements for special political missions, including the creation of a separate account aligned with the budgetary cycle for peacekeeping operations. It reiterated its call for Member States to set aside their political differences and develop a holistic solution to funding and backstopping that would best suit the needs of special political missions.

20. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), emphasized the critical role of special political missions, with their increasingly multidimensional mandates, in conflict prevention and resolution and sustainable peacebuilding. As they were tied to the regular budget, the current funding and backstopping arrangements for those missions could not accommodate the unique and volatile nature of peace and security mandates and hindered their implementation. Many stakeholders, including the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, had underscored the need to reform those arrangements. Similarly, the Board of Auditors had expressed concern at the negative effect that the funding of special political missions was having on the regular budget, an effect magnified by the considerable growth in the related resource requirements, which would amount to over 20 per cent of the regular budget of the Organization for the biennium 2016-2017. The Board's concern could be largely addressed through the adoption of the comprehensive reform proposed in 2011. In order to enhance the efficiency, transparency and fairness of the budgetary process, CELAC reiterated its support for the establishment of a separate account for special political missions that would be budgeted, funded and reported on annually with a

financial period of 1 July to 30 June and financed on the same terms as peacekeeping operations, together with an adequate backstopping provision.

21. The current session of the General Assembly provided a valuable opportunity to overcome the deadlock on the reform of funding arrangements for special political missions. Member States, particularly those with special responsibilities, must engage constructively in order to allow the Fifth Committee to take immediate action on the issue for the benefit of those served by special political missions and to ensure the functioning of the Organization's peace and security pillar.

22. **Mr. Kishimori** (Japan) reiterated his delegation's support for the mandates of special political missions. Given the broad range of demands in the field of peace and security and severe fiscal constraints faced by Member States, a balance must be struck between the Organization's various peace and security instruments, including special political missions and peacekeeping missions, to ensure that their comparative advantages were fully utilized. Such a balance would entail timely and smooth transitions between instruments, as well as a thorough transition strategy, to ensure optimal use of Member States' limited resources.

23. His delegation underscored the need for enhanced budgetary transparency to improve Member States' understanding of the budget proposals for special political missions. He concurred with the Advisory Committee that expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement could be improved to better reflect what could realistically be achieved by each mission and the activities for which each mission could be held accountable during the performance period. There was a need for enhanced accountability, including clear mandates, well-conducted operations and clearly defined timelines.

24. Taking into account the resources for the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, the total proposed budget allocation for special political missions for 2016 amounted to $571,352,500. Overall resources for special political missions for 2016-2017 must not exceed the total of $1,124 million set out in the proposed programme budget; to that end, his delegation would examine the Secretary-General's proposals to determine the scope for more efficient resource utilization.

25. While it acknowledged the concerns expressed by some delegations with regard to current funding and backstopping arrangements, his delegation was not convinced of the need to establish a separate account for special political missions, as such a measure would potentially undermine the Organization's fiscal discipline and result in an increase in the overall budget.

26. **Mr. Pedersen** (Norway), speaking also on behalf of Switzerland, said that special political missions constituted a diverse spectrum of peace operations that had become indispensable for the achievement of political settlements to conflicts, conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding. The number and complexity of those missions and the conflicts that they addressed had increased considerably, as had the corresponding share of the regular budget, now over 20 per cent, over the past fifteen years.

27. Given the increasing challenges on the ground, it was regrettable that the Secretariat had not been adequately equipped to provide funding and backstopping for special political missions. Similarly, the deferral, since 2011, of consideration of options to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of special political missions, enhance transparency and accountability, avoid duplication and facilitate oversight was unsustainable. Flexible access to funds for backstopping, with annual appropriations, was essential to enable the Secretariat to ensure the effective delivery of mandates. To that end, the recommendations in the report of the Advisory Committee on the review of arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions (A/66/7/Add.21, para. 85), which had been endorsed by the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations and the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, provided a sound basis for reforming funding and backstopping arrangements. Although the two delegations were open to alternative proposals, they stressed the difficulty of reconciling a programme budget designed for predictable resource allocation with the volatility of the requirements for special political missions, given their changing mandates.

28. The good offices, prevention and mediation role of the United Nations was more crucial than ever, as evidenced by, inter alia, its work in the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Libya and Iraq and the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel

and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Sudan and South Sudan. Greater investment in political solutions was essential, and the Secretariat must be provided with effective tools to fulfil the mandates entrusted to it by Member States.

29. **Mr. Al-Khalidy** (Iraq) said that, while his delegation appreciated the effort that had gone into producing the reports of the Secretary-General (A/70/348/Add.5) and of the Advisory Committee (A/70/7/Add.15) on the proposed resource requirements for UNAMI and was cognizant of the mounting burden on those responsible for their preparation, it nonetheless wished to emphasize the importance of the timely issuance of reports in order to allow Member States sufficient time to review them and hold in-depth consultations. His delegation was grateful to those Member States that had contributed to the funding of UNAMI and strongly supported its continued presence in Iraq. To that end, his Government would ensure that it was provided with optimal facilities and services to ensure the effective delivery of its mandates.

30. **Ms. Aşik** (Turkey) emphasized the Organization's increasing reliance on special political missions to address progressively complex and unpredictable security challenges against a backdrop of rapidly deteriorating peace and security conditions. The number of staff on the ground and volume of financial resources allocated to special political missions had increased exponentially: in 2000-2001, an initial appropriation of $86 million had been approved for special political missions, representing 6 per cent of the budget for the biennium, compared with a revised appropriation of $1.2 billion for 2010-2011, accounting for 20 per cent of the budget for the biennium. Although the current financing arrangements had proved adequate in the past, they were no longer optimal or sustainable: new financial mechanisms were needed to accommodate the volatility of resource requirements for special political missions. A special and separate account for special political missions budgeted, funded and reported on an annual basis seemed to be the only viable option.

Agenda item 143: Administration of justice at the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/70/L.6)

Draft resolution A/C.5/70/L.6: Administration of justice at the United Nations

31. *Draft resolution A/C.5/70/L.6 was adopted.*

Agenda item 160: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (*continued*) (A/C.5/70/L.7)

Draft resolution A/C.5/70/L.7: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

32. *Draft resolution A/C.5/70/L.7 was adopted.*

Agenda item 114: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(c) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee (A/70/103; A/C.5/70/8)

33. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to notes by the Secretary-General referring to article 20 of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and to the need for the General Assembly to confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General of seven persons to fill vacancies on the Investments Committee beginning on 1 January 2016 (A/70/103), and submitting the names of six persons for confirmation of appointment by the General Assembly for a one-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2016 (A/C.5/70/8). The nomination of an additional member to fill the remaining vacancy beginning on 1 January 2016 had been postponed.

34. Since the number of candidates corresponded to the number of vacancies, he took it that the Committee wished to recommend by acclamation that the Assembly should confirm the candidates' appointment.

35. *The Committee recommended by acclamation that the Assembly should confirm the appointment of Mr. Arikawa (Japan), Mr. Dhar (India), Mr. Kirdar (Iraq), Mr. Klein (United States of America), Ms. Mohohlo (Botswana) and Mr. Oliveros (Spain) for a one-year term beginning on 1 January 2016.*

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.